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ABSTRACT

This series, designed for use in inservice teacher workshops, addresses the question, "How do children and teachers use language to get things done?" The transcribed classroom discourse presented and discussed in each volume illustrates functional language in a real context based on the videotaping of undoctored classroom events from kindergarten and grades 1 to 3. Each manual contains workshop exercises to be used with the videotape, describes the theoretical framework from which the work stems, and includes verbal transcripts of the language used in the tapes. The present volume describes the principle of functional language in some detail, calling into question conventional school language assessment which deals only with language forms (sounds, vocabulary, and grammar) while often ignoring meaning relationships (semantics) and language use (pragmatics). The videotape depicts the testing of a young girl's language by eliciting responses to a set of questions based on the child's life. (Author/JB)

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FL 012 558

A WAY WITH WORDS

Participant's Manual

Ceil Kovac
Stephen R. Cahir

EXPLORING FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE
Stephen R. Cahir, Series Coordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of these materials would have been impossible without the cooperation and willing participation of many people. We are especially indebted to Roger Shuy for consistent and accurate insight and guidance throughout the entire project; to Peg Griffin for invaluable and substantive comment and criticism on both the content and format of the materials; to the staff of the office of Communication and Publications of the Center for Applied Linguistics, in particular Begay Atkinson, Dora Johnson, and our dauntless editor, Wendy Ward; to Peter Volkert, our video consultant, for his sense of humor, exceeded only by his skill; to Ruby Berkemeyer, our typist, for her ability and endless patience. We heartily thank the researchers and the elementary school teachers and children who participated in the project upon which our work is based—Children's Functional Language and Education in the Early Years (supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York). We also thank the individuals who assisted us in our field-tests, both as workshop coordinators and as participants. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the Carnegie Corporation of New York for supporting all phases of this project.

S.R.C.
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FOREWORD

Exploring Functional Language is a unique set of materials that addresses what is probably the most important question one could ask about language use in the schools: "How do children and teachers use language to get things done?" However obvious such a question may seem, it is unfortunately true that we seldom ask it. Instead, the schools usually try to determine such questions as "How correct is the usage of the children?" or "How mature is the children's language development in terms of pronunciation or grammar?" These are not unimportant questions, but they focus only on the *forms* of language rather than on its *functions*. That is, the questions address the social judgments we can make about language (is it correct or not) rather than the cognitive functions (what does the language get done).

These protocol tapes and manuals effectively illustrate functional language in its real, classroom context with videotapes of the undoctored, actual classroom events. The manuals contain workshop exercises to be used with the videotape, describe (in clear language) the theoretical framework from which the work stems, and include verbal transcripts of the language used in the tapes. All videotape samples (15 to 20 minutes in length) were taken from a large research project conducted at the Center for Applied Linguistics (Peg Griffin and Roger Shuy, *Children's Functional Language and Education in the Early Years*, 1978). Separate manuals accompany each videotape.

A Way with Words describes the principle of functional language in some detail, calling into question conventional school language assessment which deals only with language forms (sounds, vocabulary and grammar) while often ignoring meaning relationships (semantics) and language use (pragmatics).

What's What with Questions explores the use of question asking strategies in the classroom. It points out that questions do a great deal more work than merely getting information. Children have a variety of ways to use questions and this protocol suggests ways that educators can make use of them for in-service or pre-service training. *It's Your Turn* provides information about the verbal and non-verbal aspects of classroom turns at talking, when it succeeds as well as when it breaks down. *Transitions: Activity between Activities* focuses on what has been conventionally considered "down time" by educators. The videotape and manual describe how transitions can function as an actual learning event, socially and cognitively. A similar focus is presented in *When Is Reading?*, which illustrates visually that learning how to read extends far beyond "official" reading time in classrooms. Although much of the focus of these videotapes and manuals is on children's functional language use, teacher talk is also noted, especially in *Teacher Talk Works*, a visible demonstration of talk that teaches, answers, evaluates, manages, and reprimands.

There is no way that a brief overview of this sort can capture the richness of the actual videotaped events in this series. That is precisely the reason, in fact, that the authors decided to present this important information in protocol form. These are *not* books about children's functional language. They *are* children's functional language, captured in natural, real life settings, selected from hundreds of hours of research samples and presented in a way which is convincing, clear and dynamic.

Roger Shuy

INTRODUCTION

☆ What does effective language use involve?

☆ What do children accomplish with language in the classroom?

☆ What more is there to assessing children's language ability beyond evaluating correctness?

☆ How can I become more aware of my students' language abilities?

The preceding are some of the issues that will be discussed in these materials. Children use a variety of language forms to get other people to do things. The systematic nature of these different forms shows that children have subtle and complex language abilities. The language forms may differ according to who is speaking and who is being spoken to and according to the urgency of the situation.

Observing children as they use language with us and with each other does not always give us all the information we need to know about their ability. In these cases, we need to be able to observe the children's language in situations that are comparable. We use tests of one kind or another to do this. The test presented here demonstrates one way that a test can be tailored to the child's real life situation while being comparably used for many children. In these materials, we discuss some of the central aspects of children's facility with language. We also present a way to get children to display their language capabilities while avoiding some of the problems inherent in other kinds of tests.

This participant's manual is part of a packet including an instructor's manual and a videotape. The materials are intended for use in pre-service and in-service teacher training; however, they also will be of interest to other audiences, including linguistics students, educational specialists, and anyone involved in language assessment or testing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE MATERIALS

The discussion and exercise sections of this manual are designed to be flexible and interchangeable, to accommodate individual learning styles, time schedules, and your own goals.

If you are a participant using this manual in pre-service or in-service training, your instructor will plan a workshop based on these materials. **If you are working on your own,** you may find either of the following approaches helpful or you may wish to devise one of your own.

The transcript reflects the contents of the videotape. Satisfactory work can be done with this manual when the videotape is not available.

OPTION A

(1) Read through the transcript. We suggest this as the first step for any approach, since it is often difficult to read while listening to and watching the tape at the same time.

(2) Look at the tape, if available.

(3) Read the discussion section.

(4) Read the "Theoretical Framework" (strongly suggested though not necessary to complete the exercises).

(5) Do at least the following exercises:

I. Section A #1, 4
Section B #1, 2, 4
II. General Exercises #1, 4, 5

(6) Do as many of the remaining exercises as possible, rereading the discussion section as appropriate or necessary.

OPTION B

(1) Read through the transcript.

(2) Look at tape, if available.

(3) Do the following exercises:

I. Section A #1, 4
Section B #1, 2, 4
II. General Exercises #1, 4, 5

(4) Read the discussion section.

(5) Read "Theoretical Framework" (strongly suggested).

(6) Do as many of the remaining exercises as possible, rereading the discussion section as appropriate or necessary.

DISCUSSION

This discussion section is intended mainly as a point of reference for persons participating in workshops or classes based on these materials; however, issues raised here also can serve as departure points for further discussion or as a basis for assignments.

CHILDREN, LANGUAGE, & ASSESSMENT: GENERAL POINTS

Now that you have looked at the videotape and/or read through the transcript, it is useful to talk about the three key issues there:

(1) Children's facility with language;
(2) Concerns to be considered when designing test measures of children's language facility;
(3) A method of observing children's language that avoids some of the problems encountered in other measures.

Children's Facility with Language

Many researchers have investigated how children learn to speak their first language. This research has inspired descriptions of various stages in children's learning to use the sound system, the grammar and the vocabulary of their language. Studies have been done with individual children and with groups of children who have been observed or tape-recorded in conversation with their peers and caretakers. They have been asked to do a variety of tasks, including completing stories or answering questions about pictures. Some children have been interviewed repeatedly at regular intervals; others, just once. So, studies have used different populations, different ways of collecting data, and different time frameworks. The most commonly posed questions in child language studies have been: What are the features of child language? What are the different stages in the acquisition of language? Can different stages be defined or isolated?

A prevailing attitude in the field of language acquisition has been that children's speech is an incomplete approximation of adult's and that children are ineffective users of language. Certainly the description of children's language must be done in part from a developmental standpoint. That is, children's speech **does** change and develop from the time they start to talk, and in comparison to adult speech, the earliest speech is "incomplete" in some sense. For example, while adult speakers of standard English rarely omit forms of the verb *be*, it is not unusual for *be* to be absent in the earliest speech of children who are learning English as a native language (e.g., *That a lamb. Mommy busy.*). Similarly, the sound that occurs at the end of a word like *church* or *porch* may not occur in early child language because the palate is not completely developed.

Incompleteness of the sound system or of the grammar should not be taken as evidence that children cannot *use* language effectively. It has not been until fairly recently, however, that ques-

tions such as 'Do children **use** language effectively?' or even 'How do children use language?' have been asked. Notice the emphasis on the word USE and think about the difference between USE and PRODUCE.

What do we mean by **effective language use?** In all of these materials, language is seen as a tool, with the job or function of allowing speakers to accomplish a variety of tasks. Explaining, convincing, suggesting, giving advice, reprimanding, soliciting feedback, requesting, apologizing—these are all examples of language functions. In using language to do these tasks, a speaker may be described as being more or less effective.

Sometimes a function may be characterized by a particular kind of language—e.g., requests may be frequently accomplished with questions:

Will you please open the door?

or

Can you take out the garbage?

It is important to note that there is no basic one-to-one correspondence between a language function and the language forms that are used to accomplish it. In fact, there are generally many different language forms that can be used for one function. For example, the two requests accomplished above with questions might just as well be accomplished with declarative statements:

Boy, it sure is hot in here!

or

This garbage bag is full.

The choice of one form over another may depend on who is being addressed, where the conversation is taking place, or what the topic is.

As we will see, there is plenty of evidence that children are effective language users. In fact, a child may be able to use or accomplish a language function before the forms for that function are completely learned. An utterance such as *Baby shoe* may function successfully as a request, even though the utterance might be described as grammatically incomplete. Similarly, the language abilities of older children who have mastered the grammatical rules may go unnoticed. For instance, with the following three observations about the state of the world, a five-year-old child received an invitation to dinner:

- If you look across the street, you'll see that our car is gone.
- My mother worries if I miss meals.
- You know, I eat almost anything.

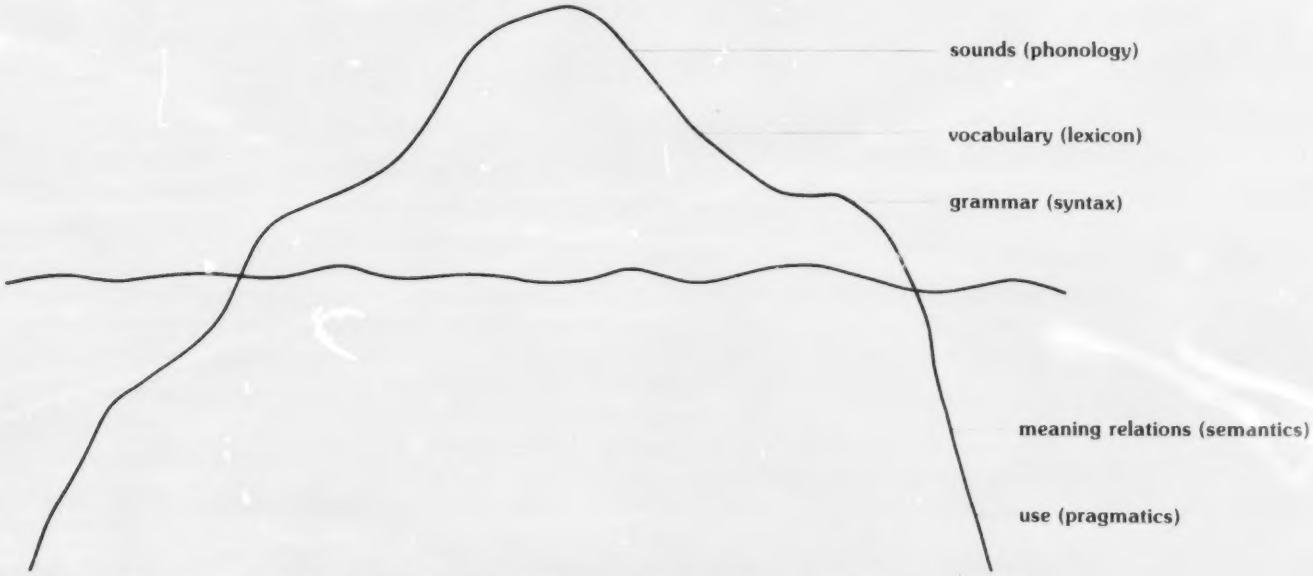
No explicit mention of dinner and no explicit request for an invitation (e.g., *Can I come in for dinner?* or *Will you please feed me supper?*) were made. Yet the task was successfully accomplished and the invitation was issued.

Clearly, the exploration of children's functional language provides insights into their facility as

language users. It also sheds new light on other aspects of language such as the sound system, the grammar, and the vocabulary.

Assessing Children's Language Ability

The description of children's language has direct implications for the assessment of children's language ability. As mentioned previously, the focus has usually been on the most visible parts of the language such as the sound system, the grammar, or the vocabulary. The following image of an iceberg illustrates the state of affairs in research and practice related to language:



For purposes of assessment, this means a focus on what is accessible and countable. Children's language use may be judged simply on whether they can or do produce a certain number of individual features of the language. These might include the *–s* that marks the plural, the possessive or the third person singular; the *–ed* that marks the past tense; or the vowel that characterizes an irregular past. Children may not necessarily be judged on whether they can effectively request clarification or get a turn to talk in class, even though the ability to do these things is essential for successful participation in class.[1]

[1]We gratefully acknowledge Dr. Roger Shuy for many of the concepts, insights, and examples handled in this portion of the discussion section.

A major problem in assessing children's language ability, then, centers around what is ultimately defined as concrete evidence of good or poor, effective or ineffective language use. Closely related to the issue of **what** is being counted is the issue of **how** the counting and the assessment are done. The *how* has two parts.

The first can be stated simply: **language happens in a context.** Utterances do not occur in a vacuum. Descriptions of language use must take into account the continuous, complex interaction of cultural and social factors that accompany and shape language use. In many ways, language is a reflection or index of social interaction. That is, when people talk to each other, more than just an exchange of information takes place. People talk to each other differently depending on how well they know each other, what their relative social or occupational status is, how old they are, whether they are male or female, who else is listening, and what they are talking about. The factors can be summarized as follows:

- relationship between speakers (e.g., husband and wife vs. strangers)
- social or occupational status (e.g., boss talking to employee vs. colleagues talking)
- age
- sex
- place of conversation, setting
- topic

It follows that the best measures of language ability would take into account these social and cultural aspects of language use. We should ask ourselves how accurately do tests that take language out of context really measure language ability. It is conceivable that the same children who can effectively retrieve a possession by saying *Would you please give me back my doll?* or direct a peer to do something by saying *Could you please move over?* might be judged as poor language users because they cannot supply the past tense of **will** or **can** in isolation or out of context. This is not to say that children should not be taught these forms or that the forms should not be tested. The point is that children can use language to do what they need to do, and measures of their language use should reflect the context in which they use language. In essence, we are suggesting that a measure of language ability be grounded in or based on the life experiences of the speaker.

The second part of the **how** issue is that **the testing situation itself is a social one** and cannot be considered as objective or abstract. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the social nature of a testing situation comes from early attempts to assess the language ability of inner-city Black children. In these hundreds of tape-recorded interviews, the children were confronted by a white interviewer who put a toy on a table and then said, "Tell me everything you can about this." The result was often defensive, monosyllabic behavior—language directly reflecting the sociolinguistic factors at work in this asymmetrical social situation. When the interview situation presented children with a more familiar setting, the verbal behavior changed drastically. In the revised situation, the interviewer was a Black man raised in Harlem, familiar with the neighborhood and its children. Two children were interviewed together, and the interviewer and the children sat casually on the floor eating potato chips. The topic was one of relevance and interest to the

children. One result was that a child who had been assessed as having no language ("verbally deprived") at the time of entering school, suddenly had so much to say that he constantly interrupted his friend.

An Alternate Measure of Children's Language Ability

These materials discuss and provide examples of a test of children's functional language ability that is structured to reflect the context familiar to the child. The test that we will describe here, known formally as a **corpus extension technique,** grew out of the research project upon which these materials are based. **Corpus** is one word used by researchers to describe the body of data that they are studying. In this case, the corpus consisted of approximately 500 half-hour videotapes of children and teachers in an independent school in Washington, D.C. The taping was conducted throughout one school year and focused on a variety of classroom activities that included whole group lessons, small groups, children working together or alone with a teacher, and school activities such as lunch, recess, and music.

A corpus like this provides a large amount of language to study. Yet even when the data sample covers a wide range of situations and the functions to be analyzed are chosen from among those most likely to occur naturally in the situations taped, gaps may remain in the sample. For example, after examining videotapes from a whole day of taping, we may find only a few occurrences of a particular language function or of a particular language strategy. In addition, the contextual factors associated with each of these utterances can be so different that comparisons between them are impossible. Then, too, how do we explain no example of a particular function or strategy? Is it simply the result of chance (it exists but not on tape) or is it a significant absence (it does not exist)?

One way to get at these problems is to **extend the corpus.** This is done by setting up the situation in which a particular function is given a chance to occur and seeing what language is used to accomplish that function. The essence of the procedure is to ask a speaker "How would you react if you found yourself in this situation? What would you say or do?" Specifically, we decided to devise a way to get examples of four language functions: (1) giving directives, (2) getting praise/feedback, (3) convincing, and (4) explaining. As we mentioned before, language does not occur in a vacuum: what is said is intimately associated with who is being talked to and what is being talked about. In designing the elicitation instrument, we paid very close attention to these facts about language usage.

One way of addressing the issue of **who is being talked to** is to determine the higher, lower, and equivalent status relationships among the children in a given classroom. We wanted to see how differently a child would talk to a peer of higher status than one of lower status; therefore, we were very interested in getting a child's-eye view of status in the classroom. To do this, we constructed and used a Status Perception Instrument (SPI). This is a modification of the Long-Jones test designed to measure social preference, in which students are asked to rank in order of preference the three other students that they like the most and the three that they dislike the

most. This, however, only gets at emotional acceptance and asks the children to think about classmates in ways we did not want to encourage or promote. We decided to adapt the measure to get a more complete picture of classroom status and to relate status to imaginary scenes children would understand and enjoy. Seven categories related to three components of status were selected:

COMPONENTS	CATEGORIES
Emotional acceptance	Like/dislike
	Physical attractiveness
	Teacher preference (emotional)
Competence	Good at school work
	Good in sports
Power	Leadership
	Teacher preference (assignment of responsibility)

For grades one through three, we designed scenarios calling up the "best" behavior for each category. For example, for the leadership category, we asked,

If an accident happened while no teacher or grown up was around, who would take charge and know what to do?

The assumption was that the child named as someone who would take charge would be one who had a social status within the group of "someone who is listened to." The scenarios were recorded on a tape which was then played to the subjects. Following each scenario, the children were asked to choose from among their classmates the three who would be most likely and least likely to fit into the scenario.

For younger children, we developed a series of story-like scenarios and pictures that used animal characters to play the parts. These stories, appropriate and entertaining to four and five-year-olds, described each character as possessing one of the status characteristics. The children were asked to choose from among their classmates the students who were most like and least like the characters.

The children's answers provided us with knowledge of the status relationships within a given classroom, and this knowledge was directly incorporated into the elicitation instrument. Examples of this appear in the upcoming discussion of specific segments of the videotape.

In dealing with the issue of **what is being talked about,** we wanted to provide a contextual anchor for the questions that we asked about language. We wanted to see what the children would say or do in situations that were very familiar to them; at the same time, we wanted to be able to compare the children's responses. To meet both of these goals, we came up with a two-part plan:

- Based on our observation of the school, the classroom activities, and the interactions among children, teachers, and staff, we were able to define a series of activities that the children would recognize (e.g., doing an art project, playing a game during recess).
- Before eliciting specific responses during the individual interviews, the interviewer talked about these activities to get information relevant to the child (e.g., the child's favorite activities in and outside the classroom, games he/she liked to play, toys or other objects he/she often brought to school, special projects that his/her class was engaged in).

We will now look at exactly how this elicitation instrument works to get examples of one language function, *giving directions*.

CORPUS EXTENSION TECHNIQUE: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Setting the Scenario

The videotape segments that this discussion is based on show interviews that elicit the *directive* function of language. The term "directive" refers to situations in which the speaker's main intent is to influence or direct the hearer(s) to do something. This may include directing the movement or change of objects, activities, and people; it may involve an elicitation of goods and services; or it may be an attempt to regulate the behavior of others. In any case, we are specifically interested in the language that occurs in these situations. In the following samples we see how children use language to accomplish the directive task, once the scenario has been set.

Situations in which directives occur are very common, and children use and receive directives frequently, particularly in a school setting. In designing the corpus extension, our goal was to set up situations in which directives would occur as they do in natural conversation. We decided on a situation in which the child being interviewed owned an object that was being held or used by another person. This person twice declined to return it, even though the interviewee had a legitimate right and an immediate need for the object. The discussion was fleshed out with details from the child's life: an activity that the child enjoyed caused him/her to put aside some prized possession; the person to be directed to return the prized possession was someone who the child knew. The child is asked what she/he would say on one attempt to get the object back, and on a second and third try as well. The interview takes account of the status of the borrower in relation to the interviewee.

Evelyn's Test

In order to get a clear idea of just how the corpus extension technique works, let's compare the

framework of a typical interview schedule to what an interviewer and a child actually said:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	ACTUAL CONVERSATION
(a) Discusses prized possessions (b) Identifies a prized possession (c) Recalls student sharing prized possession to class during sharing time	**Interviewer:** What kinds of things do you bring to school—or do you ever bring stuff like for sharing time? **Evelyn:** Yeah. Well, sometimes we bring things—when we go on a trip, we bring things—if we went to Oklahoma, we would bring, um, a little purse or some shells that we found that we would like to share with the class. **Interviewer:** Did you go to Oklahoma? **Evelyn:** No. But, um, I brought in today a thing from Mexico. It is a, um, little purse-Mexico-and it has Mexican money in it.
(d) Establishes lower- or higher-status child or teacher asking to look at prized possession (e) Target child lends prized possession to lower or higher status child or teacher and starts working on another activity, specifically identified (f) Target child finishes other activity and wants to get the prized possession back from the lower- or higher-status child or teacher	**Interviewer:** OK, supposing, like, you know, today, that you brought in that purse, and you show it during sharing time to all the people and you explain what it was and everything, and then you go off and do something else and you ask Mrs.____ to hold it for you, because you didn't want it to get lost or misplaced or anything. And so, you know, she also wants to look at it. So after a while, you want to get the purse back. **Evelyn:** Yeah.
(g) "What are you gonna say or do to get (prized possession) back from (name of lower or higher status child or teacher)?" 1. Student response—1st try	**Interviewer:** So what are you gonna say or do to get Mrs.____ to give you your purse back? **Evelyn:** I will say, 'Mrs.____, um, my mother wants me to bring my purse home' or, um, I want to bring my purse home, um, 'cause I don't want to leave it here because it might get mishandled or something, and someone might be going to Mexico and might steal some money to spend in Mexico.'

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	ACTUAL CONVERSATION
(h) "What if (name of lower- or higher-status child or teacher) says 'I'm not done with it yet, I'll be done with it in a few minutes, and there's only a little time left and you really want your (prized possession) back. What are you gonna say or do to get it back now from (name of lower- or higher-status child or teacher)?" 2. Student response—2nd try	**Interviewer:** Okay, and suppose Mrs.____ says 'Well, there's only a little time left, so I might as well hold it for you until—you know, until you have to go home and you want to get your purse back because you want to show it to somebody else-so what are you gonna say or do to get it back now from her? **Evelyn:** OK, I would say, 'Mrs.____ can I please have my purse back because I want to show it to Nancy or Evelyn or Virginia' or something. **Interviewer:** Evelyn? Isn't that you? **Evelyn:** Well, Virginia or I want to show it to myself-I want to look at it.
(i) "What if (name of lower-status or higher-status child or teacher) still keeps (prized possession) and says 'I'll be done with it in a minute.' What are you gonna say or do now to get it back from (name of lower- or higher-status child or teacher)?" 3. Student response—3rd try	**Interviewer:** And suppose Mrs. ____ says 'Well, I may as well hold it for the last couple of minutes,' What are you gonna say or do now to get it back from her? **Evelyn:** 'Mrs. ____, please give me my purse 'cause I want to put it in my bag so I don't forget it.'

As can be seen from the transcript, the interviewer goes on to elicit the responses that Evelyn would give in situations with lower and higher status peers. So far, we have described the corpus extension technique in its use with one speaker. Next we will turn our attention to the directives used by a number of different speakers. Once we have collected examples of directives using the corpus extension technique, how do we talk about the examples, clarify them, or understand what they tell us about language behavior and social interaction.

A Directive Sampler: Excerpts From Other Interviews

The second section of the transcript also contains examples of what children say in a situation where someone else has a prized possession and the object is to get it back. The utterances are presented in order from youngest to oldest child (from nursery to third grade). As we described before, the someone else is not just anybody and the prized possession is not just anything: in this particular section, the interviewer has noted the name of a child determined to have high status

and has identified a possession belonging to and prized by the child being interviewed. In this way, the context is established and a response appropriate to the situation is elicited. As we can see, the responses range from

- Robert, let me have my baseball book back.

to

- Can I have my ladybug, Laura.

to

- I'm going to let you play with my Barbie dolls.

We have defined the situation as a directive one, and we want to talk about these utterances as examples of directives. The issue is how utterances that seem so diverse can be seen as examples of the same language function.

The first utterance, *Robert, let me have my baseball book back* makes overt or **direct** reference to the issue at hand—that is, getting the baseball book back. In addition, the "let me . . ." gives this directive the form of a command or an imperative. Now look at the second utterance, *Can I have my ladybug, Laura?* While it does make reference to getting the object back, it does so in an **indirect** way and is essentially an expression of the speaker's wishes. The form of the utterance is a question, as opposed to an imperative. With the third utterance, *I'm going to let you play with my Barbie dolls*, the speaker seems to be bargaining with the hearer or offering acceptable alternatives as a way to get the object back. It is remarkable that an utterance with a form so different from the imperative—in this case, a declarative statement—can have the same function.

We will characterize utterances of the first type as **direct directives.** This group does not include all imperative sentences, but only those that make explicit the target task. Examples of direct directives in this section of the transcript include

Seth: Give that back—I was using it first.
Michael: Tough luck, Robert. Let me have it.
Jennifer: You give me that ruler back or I will tell Miss B.

It so happens that all three of these utterances are examples of directives with **adjuncts,** that is, additional material that seems to back up or strengthen the directive. The adjuncts in these examples are

I was using it first.
Tough luck, Robert.
I will tell Miss B.

Not all directives have adjuncts.

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Utterances of the second kind are **indirect directives.** They are references to the action or to the outcome of the action in utterances that are not imperatives. Other examples here are

Seth: Please may I have my cable car back?
Andy: It's almost time to leave so can I have them back?
Jennifer: . . . could I please have it back now 'cause, 'cause it's mine and I really, really want it back right now.

Finally, we call utterance of the third type **inferred directives.** While they do not refer directly to the action or the outcome of the action, they can be said to refer to the rights of the speaker the object in question or to the reasonableness of the request. One of the ways that the speaker can refer to reasonableness is by offering positive or negative alternatives, which is what we see in the third utterance. That is, the speaker is making a request that one object be returned by assuring the hearer that another one will take its place (i.e., the Barbie dolls). Other examples of inferred directives are

Andy: You just grabbed it, so when we get two, you can have one to use and I can have one to use.
Ingrid: I'm not gonna be your friend ever again.
Ashley: Lots of people really want to see my ladybug.

Table 1 is a classification of all the utterances in the second part of the transcript. Seeing them displayed in this way leads us to some questions. For example, within each grade level, are there differences depending upon (a) who is being addressed or (b) whether it is the first, second, or third try? Are there noticeable age-related differences such that younger children use more of one kind of strategy than older children?

We see from examining the table that the use of *direct directives* is uncommon. In fact, direct directives are never used to address the teacher—the closest such strategy being direct + adjunct. Furthermore, status does not seem to affect the use of direct directives. There are two direct directives used with higher-status peers and three with lower-status peers—not a significant difference. Only at the nursery level do we see a sharp difference between the strategies chosen for higher- and lower-status peers: while nonverbal strategies (e.g., "I would just grab it.") follow the use of direct directives with lower-status peers, higher-status peers are consistently addressed with inferred directives.

In several instances, it appears that the children see a difference between addressing the teacher and addressing their peers. For example, in the second grade (first try), while both higher- and lower-status peers are addressed with direct directives, an indirect strategy is used with the teacher. In the second graders third attempts, direct + adjunct strategies are used with peers, while indirect + adjunct are used for the teacher.

Table 1

	1st try			*2nd try*			*3rd try*		
	Teacher	**High**	**Low**	**Teacher**	**High**	**Low**	**Teacher**	**High**	**Low**
N	Seth Indirect	Ingrid Inferred	Seth Direct + Adjunct	Seth Please	Ingrid Inferred	Seth Non-verbal	Seth ?	Ingrid Inferred	Seth Non-verbal
K	Andy Indirect + Adjunct	Andy Indirect + Adjunct	Andy Inferred	Andy Inferred	Andy Indirect + Adjunct	Andy Indirect + Adjunct	Andy Indirect	Andy Inferred	Andy Inferred
1	Ashley Inferred	Ashley Indirect + Adjunct	Ashley Indirect + Adjunct	Ashley Indirect	Ashley Inferred	Ashley Inferred	Ashley Inferred	Ashley Inferred	Ashley Inferred
2	Jennifer Indirect	Michael Direct	Jennifer Direct + Adjunct	Jennifer Indirect	Michael Inferred	Jennifer Inferred	Jennifer Indirect + Adjunct	Michael Direct + Adjunct	Jennifer Direct + Adjunct
3	Evelyn Inferred	Evelyn Indirect	Evelyn Indirect + Adjunct	Evelyn Indirect + Adjunct	Evelyn Indirect + Adjunct	Evelyn Inferred	Evelyn Direct + Adjunct	Evelyn Inferred	Evelyn Indirect + Adjunct

The overall trend in the entire corpus is for a decrease in direct directive strategies and an increase in nondirective strategies at each new try. It seems that a speaker starts out with an indirect directive, and when the hearer does not return the prized possession, the speaker resorts to the reasonableness of his request through an inferred directive.

Let's compare the general trends to the examples on the videotape. If we group the utterances together by attempts, it looks like this:

Directive Type	**1st Try**	**2nd Try**	**3rd Try**	
Direct	*3*	*0*	*3*	*(Same)*
Indirect	*8*	*6*	*3*	*(Decrease)*
Inferred	*4*	*7*	*7*	*(Increase)*
Nonverbal	*0*	*1*	*1*	
Please	*0*	*1*		
Inferred				
Reasons	*4*	*6*	*7*	
Rights	*0*	*1*	*0*	

We see that only six out of 45 utterances are direct directives, and that there is a shift from indirect to inferred, from the first to the third try. We also see an apparent preference for the reasonableness strategy over the rights strategy, with the inferred directives.

As we have pointed out earlier, it has frequently been assumed that children's speech is merely an imperfect rendition of the adult model. This approach assumes that children have difficulty producing the sounds and structures of their native language, let alone using different strategies that reflect a variety of social situations. Intuitively one might assume that children's directive usage is limited to direct directives, and indirect and inferred strategies being reflections of a more subtle awareness of the nature of social interaction.

It is clear from this brief look at the language produced in the corpus extension that such intuitive assumptions are misguided. We see from the examples here that children are indeed aware of the way that social relations are reflected in language. They clearly know that the goal of retrieving the object in question cannot always be achieved by the most direct means available. They also display a knowledge of the appropriate language forms to be used in the different situations that they are confronted with in the corpus extension.

It is also clear that the language skills displayed in the corpus extension are rarely called upon or examined in formal assessment situations or tests. Ironically, without the knowledge of how to make a successful request, without being able to convince, explain, or get a turn to talk, that is, without a knowledge of how to *use* language, knowledge of the forms of the language is practically superfluous. It is our hope that this discussion of the corpus extension technique sheds light on children's language ability well beyond sounds and structures and on a way to observe that ability.

EXERCISES

The following set of exercises is divided into two sections. In the first one, the exercises are based directly on the tape and transcript. The second section consists of general exercises. In both sections, the exercises may be done independently or as assignments in either a workshop or a class setting. While the exercises may be adapted to different workshop or class formats, many of them are best done with pencil and paper and a tape recorder.

The general purpose of these exercises is to focus and refine your understanding of the topic at hand, both through *observation* and *discussion* of the tape segments and through *application* of what is learned from these observations and discussions. It is *not* the purpose of the exercises to elicit criticism of the behavior of the children or the teachers seen on the tape.

I. EXERCISES BASED ON TAPE AND TRANSCRIPT MATERIAL

A. Evelyn's Test

(1) Examine this section of the tape and transcript. Can the transcript be divided into parts? Discuss where you would choose to divide it and why. Make an outline of this section. .

(2) Consider the first four utterances (two by Rosa and two by Evelyn). How would you describe them, and are they distinct in any way from what follows?

(3) Consider Rosa's next five utterances. Would you say that they have a purpose? If so, how do they accomplish it?

(4) In the first part, Evelyn provides four answers to Rosa's question "What are you gonna say or do . . . ?" Pull these four answers out of the transcript and write them down in sequence. (The second and third answers are actually one response.) Are there any differences between the four utterances? What kinds of differences are they, and how would you describe them in your own words? Think about the characteristics mentioned that influence how people do things with words.

(5) Repeat exercise 4 with the next two sections of the transcript.

B. A Directive Sampler

(1) Compare the answers within each of the nine segments of this section of the transcript (i.e. compare the following utterances in the first part):

Seth:	Please may I have my cable car back?
Andy:	May I please have my puppets now? I'm finished with the house.
Ashley:	Can I put it on the science table?
Jennifer:	Miss ____, can I please have my [unintelligible] back now?
Evelyn:	I will say, um, my mother wants me to bring my purse home or, um, I want to bring my purse home, um, 'cause I don't want to leave it here 'cause it might get mishandled or something, and someone might be going to Mexico and might steal some money to spend in Mexico.

(2) Compare utterance #1 in segment I with utterance #1 in segments II and III, i.e.

Seth:	Please may I . . . . (segment I)
Ingrid:	I'm going to . . . . (segment II)
Seth:	Give that back . . . . (segment III)

What is the major difference concerning the *context* of these utterances? Does that account for the differences between the utterances? If so, how?

(3) Repeat this exercise, comparing the remaining utterances (2, 3, etc.) in the *first try* segments (I-III) with their correspondingly numbered utterances in the *second try* segments (IV-VI) and the *third try* segments (VII-IX).

(4) Now compare utterance #1 in segment I to the first utterance in the fourth segment and first utterance in the seventh segment. Again, what is the major factor that distinguishes these utterances? Does this factor influence the form of the utterances? If so, how?

(5) Repeat this exercise as follows by comparing the
2nd utterances in 1st, 4th, 7th segments.
3rd utterances in 1st, 4th, 7th segments.
4th utterances in 1st, 4th, 7th segments.
5th utterances in 1st, 4th, 7th segments.

II. GENERAL EXERCISES

(1) Using the outline you made for question 1 in section I, create a test that you could use to test directive use with some of your students. Remember that it must include contextual build-up material and the names of specific children.

(2) Try out your test, tape-recording it if possible. What are the directive strategies used? Are status differences reflected in the choice of directive? What did you find out that you didn't expect to? For example, did children that you had judged as ineffective/effective language users seem to be more or less effective?

(3) Devise and implement a similar test to elicit the strategies that children use to
(a) get comments and/or praise on their work,
(b) request clarification on some problem they encounter,
(c) explain an assignment to a peer.
Once again, describe the strategies used. Can the strategies be grouped in any way? Are status differences reflected in choice of strategy? Did you see any strategies that you had not been aware of before?

(4) Take note of situations in everyday life in which someone is requesting clarification. Be sure to notice
(a) who is involved in the situation (friend, boss, stranger, age differences, sex differences);
(b) what verbal strategy is used;
(c) what follows the request.
Would you say that all requests for clarification that you observed were accomplished successfully? What accounts for a successful or unsuccessful request?

(5) Make a note of the requests for clarification that occur in your classroom, those directed to you as teacher, and, if possible, those directed to peers. Compare the classroom examples to those you collected elsewhere—what differences do you notice? Can you say that children's strategies are different from those used by adults? If so, how?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical discussion provides the reader with an idea of the background in which the research discussed in the booklet occurs. Several related approaches to language will be discussed—approaches that have a common focus on the intersection of language usage and social behavior and the nature of language as a tool for accomplishing social tasks.

Let us begin this discussion by considering three examples from the transcript. In his first attempt to retrieve a possession from his teacher, Seth says:

Please may I have my cable car back?

However, in his first attempt to retrieve a possession from a lower-status peer, he says:

Give that back. I was using it first.

In his second attempt to get the possession from a lower-status peer, Seth reports that:

I would—I would just grab it away.

This last example provides an interesting contrast between verbal and nonverbal strategies used to accomplish a particular task. It also provides clear evidence for the idea that by uttering certain sentences, speakers are *doing* something as opposed to simply *saying* something. Exploration of this concept was begun by British philosopher J.L. Austin (1962), who pointed out that there are certain actions that cannot be accomplished without language. For example, in many cultures people are not considered married until certain sentences have been spoken both by the couple and by other authorized individuals. Likewise, the christening of a baby is not complete without the speaking of appropriate words by the appropriate people. Austin concentrated his investigation on a relatively small class of words known as *performatives*, words which, when used by a suitable speaker in a certain form (first person singular, present tense), accomplish an act or do something. Examples of performatives include:

- *I now pronounce you husband and wife* (said in the course of a marriage ceremony).
- *I christen this ship the Queen Mary* (said while smashing a bottle of champagne against the ship).
- *Elmer, I baptize you . . .* (said while sprinkling water on Elmer's forehead).

Austin also suggested that in order for the utterance of a performative sentence to be valid and to in fact *do* something, the circumstances or context in which the utterance occurs must be right. For example, for the utterance *I now pronounce you husband and wife* to be valid, there has to be such a thing as a wedding ceremony which people accept as evidence that a couple is married, and the ceremony is not valid unless the right people conduct it (e.g., a priest or a justice of the peace) in the acceptable manner.

While Austin's work is limited to a small set of almost formula-like utterances, it has inspired linguists to explore the concept of doing things with utterances occurring in everyday conversations as well. We see evidence of this concept in Seth's utterances. In her first attempt to retrieve a possession from a higher-status peer, Ingrid says:

I'm going to let you play with my Barbie dolls.

When considered separately from its context, this utterance might seem to be irrelevant and might be described as marking an abrupt change of topic. However, an understanding of the nature of conversation makes it clear that the utterance is entirely appropriate for the context in which it occurs.

Among those who have investigated the nature of everyday conversation is the philosopher H.P. Grice (1975). He proposes the cooperative principle, whereby each participant in a conversation believes, unless given strong reason to abandon that belief, that other conversational participant(s) act rationally, doing and saying things for the ultimate purpose of achieving communication in the most direct way. He proposes four *maxims* of conversation, principles that ensure clear communication:

(1) Be as informative as required; be no more informative than required (maxim of quantity);
(2) Say only what you believe to be true (maxim of quality);
(3) Be relevant (maxim of relevance);
(4) Be succinct; do not be obscure, do not be ambiguous (maxim of manner).

The most interesting part of Grice's work concerns his account of possible *violations* of a maxim. For example, if a professor's letter of recommendation for a less-than-outstanding student concentrates on the high quality of the student's penmanship and avoids topics of scholarship and achievement, a prospective employer might say, "Hmm . . . the relevant topic here is academic ability. Who cares about handwriting?" The maxim of relevance has been violated. The professor did not violate the maximum just to be frivolous but to communicate something indirectly.

With his account of conversational maxims and their violation Grice addresses the issue of why utterances that seem ambiguous, irrelevant, or redundant are actually doing specific work in conversation. The important point is that the participants in a conversation may not be able to adhere to all the maxims *and* be polite or nonthreatening at the same time. It is sometimes more effective to communicate information indirectly, and the search for an indirect approach may result in the violation of a maxim. Thus, Ingrid might have said:

Give me back my (the possession in question).

or she could have just grabbed it. She chose instead an indirect strategy that appears to violate the maxim of relevance and yet probably accomplishes the retrieval of the possession:

I'm going to let you play with my Barbie dolls.

One key to understanding the relationship between language usage and social interaction lies

in answers to questions such as "Why *are* people polite to one another in the first place?" or "Why can't people just go around being as direct as necessary?" Answers to these questions necessarily come from an investigation of the intricate and complex nature of social interaction, interaction which language mirrors.

With respect to politeness, let us consider Evelyn's first attempt to get her Mexican purse back from her teacher:

> *I will say, Mrs. ____, um, my mother wants me to bring my purse home or, um, I want to bring my purse home, um, 'cause I don't want to leave it here because it might get mishandled or something, and someone might be going to Mexico and might steal some money to spend in Mexico.*

This long-winded and indirect utterance contrasts with the ones that she addressed to her peers. Again, on the first attempt to retrieve possessions, first from a higher-status peer, then from a lower-status peer:

> *Jeffrey, may I please have my [unintelligible] back?*

and

> *Larry, can I please have, um, those scissors back—I was using them. You can go get your own scissors—they're just across the table.*

Even though both of these requests are accomplished with questions and are less direct than the imperative *Give me that*, they are nevertheless more direct than the utterance addressed to the teacher. It is clear that Evelyn is aware of the different levels of politeness that come into play when addressing teachers and peers. One might even say that in the utterance addressed to the teacher, Evelyn violates the maxim of quantity and perhaps the maxim of relevance.

Robin Lakoff's work on politeness in conversation (1977) should be noted here. She suggests that if a maxim is intentionally violated—that is, if a speaker says too much or too little or says something that is apparently irrelevant, ambiguous, or untrue—it is because the speaker may be trying to conform to *another* set of rules that would, in turn, be violated if the speaker adhered strictly to Grice's maxims. This other set of rules are rules of politeness, including:

- formality: do not impose, remain aloof;
- hesitance: allow the addressee options;
- equality or camaraderie: act as though you and the addressee were equal; make the addressee feel good.

The rule most relevant to Evelyn's utterance is probably the one pertaining to hesitance. To use a question or an imperative would restrict the teacher's options. With her statement, Evelyn simply expresses her preference without demanding that the teacher agree with her.

In addressing each other, speakers clearly make assumptions about the beliefs, desires, or capabilities of the addressee, and these assumptions are reflected in the language used. Some scholars claim that speech rests on mutually shared beliefs or *conditions* that make the perfor-

mance of the act possible. This means, for example, that for a *request* to be successful, the speaker making the request must believe that the addressee is able or willing to do what is requested. Thus, in two attempts to retrieve a possession from a higher-status peer, Ingrid says:

I'm not gonna be your friend ever again.

and

I'm not gonna talk to you ever again.

The condition here is that Ingrid's friendship or her participation in conversation is desirable, and the threat of losing it is enough to induce the addressee to return the object in question.

An important characteristic of what might be referred to as "classical" speech act research (Montes, 1970) is that it primarily examines the *utterances*, and not the situation in which utterances occur. To understand the importance of this distinction, consider the following:

(1) *Type this.*
(2) *Please type this.*
(3) *Would you mind typing this?*
(4) *What are you doing between now and 11:45?*
(5) *I need this by noon.*

In the "classical" speech act approach, utterances 1-3 would be classified as directives, numbers 1 and 2 being *direct* directives, because of the bare imperative form, and 3 being an *indirect* directive. The connection between example 3 and examples 1 and 2 could be explained in terms of a condition on the speech act of requesting. That condition might be expressed as "the speaker of the request fears that what he is requesting might be an imposition on the hearer," or "there exists the possibility that the speaker's request is an imposition on the hearer." Reference to this possibility is made in the actual request. So, in this line of reasoning, if the request is not made *directly*, it can be made *indirectly* through reference to one of the conditions on the direct request.

A crucial point about this kind of analysis and the preceding examples is that the analysis really provides no way of accounting for examples 4 and 5, which occur as requests in situations similar or identical to the ones in which examples 1-3 occur. Consider an example from the transcript—Ashley's first attempt or retrieve her paintbrush from a lower-status peer:

I went down to get some more paint and you took my paintbrush. I want my paintbrush back.

This utterance falls into the category of *inferred* objectives, with a clear statement of Ashley's desire.

One might ask, "Well, what would happen if the point of departure for an explanation of language usage was function. That is, given a language function such as *requesting*, what are the different kinds of utterances that speakers use to accomplish that function?" That, in fact, is the approach underlying the research project on which these materials are based. As Montes (1978) states in the final report of the project:

. . . our corpus is not limited to those forms which a speech act analysis would identify as

> directives but is limited to a particular set of situations—where the addressee has an object over which the speaker has rights. We are interested in understanding the range of utterances—their form and content and function—that are available for use by children in these situations. We are also interested in noting any variation in the range of utterances available by virtue of characteristics of the speakers (their age, their sex, their perceived language use ability) and characteristics of the addressee and the urgency of the situation. (p.1)

Thus, the unifying factor in the research described in our materials is an approach to explaining and understanding language within the larger context of social interaction. While such an approach may not surprise the reader, one must remember that social and interactional factors are relatively recent additions to descriptions of language. Previously, language was by and large explained and understood as an autonomous system. The focus on the relationship between language usage and context came about partly by default: examination of language usage within the autonomous system framework raised questions about language that could not be explained in terms of that framework. When researchers began looking at the context of use, some of these questions were answered and a new perspective on the nature of language began to emerge. What also began to emerge was evidence in children's speech of functional language strategies hitherto described only for adult speech. We see numerous examples in these materials of children's knowledge of and facility with sophisticated and subtle language strategies. Children do indeed have a way with words.

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GUIDELINES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

Several of the exercises in this manual require tape-recording and transcribing portions of conversation. The following are some basic guidelines for transcribing. A look at the transcript in this manual will also be useful.

(1) Decide how you will refer to each speaker, either by full name or by initial. Put this full name or initial in front of every new turn taken by that speaker.

Ann: Okay.
Melissa: Wait. Okay.
Ann: Measure—Do it again.

(2) In order to transcribe accurately everything a given speaker says, you may want to listen to a small segment, stop the tape, write down what you remember, and then listen to that segment again. Do not be surprised if what you *think* you hear and what is actually said are two different things. That is the reason for replaying difficult or quickly spoken segments. It may be helpful to listen to longer stretches on both sides of the troublesome sequence.

(3) Sometimes two people start talking at once, or one person interrupts another. This is usually shown in transcription with brackets marking the overlapping section:

Melissa: It's [as far out as
Ann: No, it might not be] it can go.

It is, of course, often difficult to hear what either speaker is saying in a case of overlap. As you can note, the continuing utterance of the person who keeps on talking after the overlap should be transcribed.

(4) Sometimes it is simply impossible to hear or understand what someone has said. This is dealt with by using square brackets; sometimes the word *unintelligible* is also included.

T: I'm going to [unintelligible] I'm going to go over to the listening center.

In other cases, you may not be entirely sure about a given word or sequence. This can be indicated as follows:

Pupil: I think we're gonna have some fun.

It may sometimes be impossible to tell who is talking. This can be indicated as follows:

(Unknown Speaker): I don't think so.

(5) There may be some information concerning nonverbal behavior or pauses that you want to include in your transcript. Parenthesis can be used for this:

Albert: Bambi.
Garnett: (shakes head "no")
Albert: What?
T: [unintelligible] (pause) Who is Dan talking to?
Pupils: (raise hands)

TAPE TRANSCRIPT

On The Playground

Mark: Yes, ma'am. Next is our next interview! Next channel . . . 501. Now this station is the best. Now why don't—we don't [unintelligible] This program [unintelligible] a special interview. Last night [unintelligible] kidnapped. So, here's our other program. Here's our other interview.

Pupil: The interviews for today are really serious. Thank you. You're not very welcome to do what I'm doing.

Sometimes children show off their facility with language like these children did. They were giving us their idea of what they think it's like to be broadcasting on television or radio. In this tape we first focus on a way to get a child to let us see her language facility without waiting for her to "show off."

Sometimes observing children as they use language with us and each other doesn't give us all the information we need. Sometimes it is useful to know how a child's language changes over time, or how some instructional program affects the child's language, or how a child is like others in a group or different from them. In these cases, we need to be able to observe the child's language in situations that we can say are somehow alike. We use tests of one kind or another to do this. The kind of test shown next was designed to avoid some of the criticism that sociolinguists have made about tests. The people and objects and events referred to in the test are all built from the child's life.

Please remember, it is harder to look at tapes of really occurring activities than at tapes of actors presenting a performance. Remember, too, that the eye and ear of the video equipment emphasizes certain things that might not noticed if you were present in the classroom. Most important, remember these are only short examples, and it is not reasonable to make judgments about the abilities or personalities of the teachers or the students.

Evelyn's Test

Rosa: What kinds of things do you bring to school—or do you ever bring stuff like for sharing time?

Evelyn: Yeah. Well, sometimes we bring things—when we go on a trip, we bring things from Oklahoma or something—if we went to Oklahoma, we would bring like, um, a little purse or some shells that we found that we would like to share with the class.

Rosa: Did you go to Oklahoma?

Evelyn: No. But, um, I brought in today a thing from Mexico. It is a, um, little purse—Mexico—and it has Mexican money in it.

Rosa: OK, supposing, like, you know, today, that you brought in that purse, and you show it during sharing time to all the people and you explain what it was and everything, and then you go off and do something else and you ask Mrs. ____ to hold it for you, because you didn't want it to get lost or misplaced or anything. And so, you know, she also wants to look at it. So after a while, you want to get the purse back

Evelyn: Yeah.

Rosa: So what are you gonna say or do to get Mrs. ____ to give you your purse back?

Evelyn: I will say, 'Mrs. ____, um, my mother wants me to bring my purse home, or, um, I want to bring my purse home, um, 'cause I don't want to leave it here because it might get mishandled or something, and someone might be going to Mexico and might steal some money to spend in Mexico.'

Rosa: Okay, and suppose Mrs. ____ says, 'Well, there's only a little time left, so I might as well hold it for you until—you know, until you have to go home' and you want to get your purse back because you want to show it to somebody else—so what are you gonna say or do to get it back now from her.

Evelyn: OK. I would say, 'Mrs. ____, can I please have my purse back because I want to show it to Nancy or Evelyn or Virginia' or something.

Rosa: Evelyn? Isn't that you?

Evelyn: Well, Virginia or I want to show it to myself—I want to look at it.

Rosa: And suppose Mrs. ____ says 'Well, I may as well hold it for the last couple of minutes.' What are you gonna say or do now to get it back from her?

Evelyn: 'Mrs. ____, please give me my purse 'cause I want to put it in my bag so I don't forget it.'

Rosa: Um, you like sewing, right?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Rosa: That's one of the things you like best, right? OK . . . supposing one day you were in workshop and everybody was sewing or a bunch of people were sewing and you were cutting stuff out with the scissors—you know—cutting a pattern out and you were going to then stitch it together—and you put the scissors aside and turned around to get something that's behind you and then, when you turn back, um . . . Larry has the scissors and is cutting out some paper—and you want the scissors back because you were using them and you need to finish your pattern, right—cutting out your pattern—so what are your gonna say or do to get the scissors back from Larry?

Evelyn: I'd say, 'Larry, can I please have, um, those scissors back—those scissors back—I was using them. You can go get your own scissors—they're just across the table.'

Rosa: Well, supposing Larry says 'Just a minute, I'm not done with it.' What are you gonna say or do to get it back—to get the scissors back now from him.

Evelyn: 'Larry, just, just cut that cut and then go and get your own scissors.'

Rosa: And Larry says, 'I'll give it back as soon as I'm done' and you want the scissors back right then so what are you gonna say or do now to get them back from him?

Evelyn: 'Larry, if you don't give me back those scissors, I'm going to—I'm going to—I am going to throw away what you've cut.'

Rosa: OK, supposing one day, the day you brought your purse, showed it to the class, and then, you know, after sharing, somebody asks you to look at it—say Kristin asks to look at it.

Evelyn: Yeah.

Rosa: OK, so you lend her the purse, and she's looking at it and you go off and do something else and then you want to get your purse back from Kristin—so what are you gonna say or do to get the purse back from Kristin.

Evelyn: I'm gonna say, 'Kristin may I please have my purse back because I think I gave you enough time to look at it.'

Rosa: And she says, 'I'm not done with it yet—I'll be done with it in a minute'—and there's little time left and you really want to get your purse back—so what are you gonna say or do now to get it back from her?

Evelyn: Uh—I'm gonna say, 'Kristin please may I have my purse back—I'll probably bring it in tomorrow again.'

Rosa: And Kristin keeps it and says, 'I'll be done with it in a minute'—so what are you gonna say or do now to get it back from her?

Evelyn: I'm going to say, 'Kristin there's nothing more to look at it for—you've seen all the money, you've seen everything inside of it, and you've seen the purse—now what's—what else is there to look at?'

A Directive Sampler: Excerpts from Other Interviews

Here are some of the other ways the children use language to get objects back from other people. The objects range from school supplies through toys brought from home. The people who have the objects range from teachers to schoolmates who are looked up to and others who are less respected. These are examples of the language used in test situations similar to the one you just saw.

I. Getting It Back: The First Try.

The Teacher Has It.

Seth: 1. Please may I have my cable car back.

Andy: 2. May I please have my puppets now? I'm finished with the house.

Ashley: 3. Can I put it on the science table?

Jennifer: 4. Miss ____, can I please have my [unintelligible] back now?

Evelyn: 5. Um, my mother wants me to bring my purse home or, um, I want to bring my purse home, um, 'cause I don't want to leave it here because it might get mishandled or something, and someone might be going to Mexico and might steal some money to spend in Mexico.

II. Getting It Back: The First Try.
A Child Who Is a Leader Has It.

Ingrid: 1. I'm going to let you play with my Barbie dolls.

Andy: 2. I stopped swinging on the swing so [unintelligible] can I please have my stuffed animal bean bag back?

Ashley: 3. Can I have my ladybug, Laura? I, um, want to show it to Mrs. ____.

Michael: 4. Robert, let me have my baseball book back.

Evelyn: 5. Jeffrey, may I please have my shoe back?

III. Getting It Back: The First Try.
A Child Who Is Not a Leader Has It.

Seth: 1. Give that back—I was using it first.

Andy: 2. You just grabbed it, so when we get two, you can have one to use and I can have one to use.

Ashley: 3. I went down to get some more paint and you took my paintbrush. I want my paintbrush back.

Jennifer: 4. Laura, give me back my ruler 'cause I really need it 'cause Mrs. B. gave me this assignment to measure a desk.

Evelyn: 5. Larry, can I please have, um, those scissors back—those scissors back—I was using them. You can go get your own scissors—they're just across the table.

If the teacher or the child doesn't give back the book or toy or scissors, what happens? Instead of giving it back, someone could say, 'Just a minute. I'm not done with it yet.' Here's what the children say on a second try.

IV. Getting It Back: Second Try.
The Teacher Still Has It.

Seth: 1. Please (and then I think she would say OK)

Andy: 2. I really want it . . . because I'm finished with the house.

Ashley: 3. Some people want to see my ladybug.

Jennifer: 4. I'm gonna say, um, I'm gonna say that well, I want to play with it with a friend and she wants to play now and I want to, too. And it's mine, anyway.

Evelyn: 5. Can I please have my purse back because I want to show it to Nancy.

V. Getting It Back: Second Try.
A Child Who Is a Leader Still Has It.

Ingrid: 1. I'm not gonna be your friend ever again.

Andy: 2. It's almost time to leave so can I have them back?

Ashley: 3. I need it to give it to Miss ____.

Michael: 4. You've had enough time looking at it.

Evelyn: 5. May I please—Jeffrey, may I please have my shoe back—my mother doesn't want it to get broken and she doesn't want people to be handling it too much.

VI. Getting It Back: Second Try.
A Child Who Is Not a Leader Still Has It.

Seth: 1. I would, I would just grab it away.

Andy: 2. I'm building a building and you're just playing with it. That's not what you do with a block, so can I have it back now?

Ashley: 3. I need it back to finish my painting.

Jennifer: 4. When Miss B. [unintelligible] I'm gonna tell her that you took it.

Evelyn: 5. Larry, just cut that cut and then go and get your own scissors.

What happens if the teacher or child refuses again to give it back, saying 'Wait a minute, just a minute.' Here's what the children say on a third try.

VII. Getting It Back: Third Try.
Looks Like The Teacher Is Going To Keep It.

Seth: 1. Well, it would be all right. That's what I would say.

Andy: 2. May I please have it?

Ashley: 3. Lots of people really want to see my ladybug.

Jennifer: 4. [unintelligible] could I please have it back now 'cause, 'cause it's mine and I really, really want it back right now.

Evelyn: 5. Give me my purse 'cause I want to put it in my bag so I don't forget it.

VIII. Getting It Back: Third Try.
Looks Like The Child Who Is a Leader Is Going To Keep It.

Ingrid: 1. I'm not gonna talk to you ever again.

Andy: 2. It is really almost time to go home—look at the clock and see for yourself.

Ashley: 3. I need my ladybug.

Michael: 4. Tough luck, Robert. Let me have it.

Evelyn: 5. My mother said, um, after I finish showing it for me to put it back in the plastic bag and I already didn't listen to her once and let you see it and then it would be worse if I let you see it more.

IX. Getting It Back. Third Try.
Looks Like The Child Who Is Not a Leader Is Going To Keep It.

Seth: 1. [unintelligible] I would start hitting.

Andy: 2. I really want it 'cause I want to finish my building.

Ashley: 3. I really need, um, I need it for my painting.

Jennifer: 4. You give me that ruler back or I will tell Miss B.

Evelyn: 5. Larry, if you don't give me back those scissors, I'm going to—I'm going to—I am going to throw away what you've just cut.

On The Playground

Mark: Yes, ma'am. Next is our next interview! Next channel . . . 501. Now this station is the best. Now why don't— we don't [unintelligible]. This program [unintelligible] a special interview. Last night [unintelligible] kidnapped. So, here's our other program. Here's our other interview.

Pupil: The interviews for today are really serious. Thank you. You're not very welcome to do what I'm doing.